Article for December 2010 *Squol Quol*

Protecting the Seapond in Case of an Oil Spill

Two days before Halloween, on October 29, 2010, the Oil Spill Response Team practiced the response to a scary scenario: A major oil spill originating from one of the oil refineries north of the Reservation with oil heading into Lummi Bay and threatening to enter the Seapond through the tide gates.

In a case like this the Geographical Response Plan calls for the protection of all tide gates by deflective booms. The strategy that was practiced (NPS-17) was to secure 500 feet of boom at both ends by shore anchors to the dike. The center of the boom is then secured by an anchor in the water so that the boom forms a triangle.

The Lummi Natural Resources Department (LNR) and Lummi Nation Police Department (LNPD) staff tested this booming strategy at the tide gates just south of the clam plant on the dike. After a pre-meeting at the LNR offices, the Response Team loaded Water Resources Division's 16-foot boat and headed to a launch site on the dike. At the same time, several team members rearranged rocks and rubble at the launch site to repair the ramp. Other team members drove the Lummi Oil Spill Response trailer to the clam plant and readied the boom for deployment. The 16-foot boat, skippered by Frank Lawrence III, Jamie Mattson, and Jean Snyder, towed the boom off the shore and the shore crew secured it to pilings close to the tide gates. After securing the other end of the boom close to the launch site, the boat crew anchored the center of the boom with an anchor a couple of hundred feet in front of the tide gates. The entire maneuver including loading the boat, repairing the launch site, and boom deployment took less than an hour and half.

The LNPD Natural Resources officers led by Sgt. Ed Conway had launched the police boat "Raider" from Gooseberry Point and had observed the first boom deployment and then executed the same strategy. Reloading the boom into the trailer and storing the boats and equipment concluded a successful oil spill response drill.